The Teachings of MRS. EDDY

289.5
C752

W. T. CONNER

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

presented by

MARTHA CIRCLE

First Baptist Church

Boone, Iowa

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

THE TEACHINGS OF MRS. EDDY

By W. T. CONNER

Professor of Systematic Theology in the Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas

BROADMAN PRESS
Nashville, Tennessee

LIBRARY
CENTRAL BAPTIST SEMINARY
KANSAS CITY 2, KANSAS

289.5
C752

FOREWORD

This little book was first issued in 1926. It has been out of print for some time. I have received many requests for it. Hence this second edition. It is now being published just as it was before. My effort at first was to state and discuss briefly the essential principles of the teachings of Mrs. Eddy. So far as I know Christian Science has not changed in its fundamentals. So the book is being put out in its original form.

W. T. CONNER

Seminary Hill, Fort Worth, Texas
April 2, 1947

28641

Copyright 1926
Sunday School Board
Southern Baptist Convention
Nashville, Tenn.

Printed in the United States of America

THE TEACHINGS OF MRS. EDDY

IT is my purpose in this little book to set forth as briefly as I can some of the fundamental teachings of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, and give a discussion of those teachings. I shall aim at two things, so far as my method of discussion is concerned. One is to be as brief as I can consistently with truth; the other is to be clear. In this way I hope to conserve the time of the reader and to set forth the teachings of Mrs. Eddy so that in their main import they can not be misunderstood. Of course, my treatment will not be complete. Much more I should like to say, but since I am aiming to summarize so as to save time and space I shall have to deny myself that privilege.

My main authority for what I shall say will be Mrs. Eddy's book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." The references in parentheses are to the pages of the edition of 1913.

If anyone should think that I have not given a true or fair interpretation of Mrs. Eddy's teachings, I would remind him that it is in substance the interpretation given by all unbiased writers on the subject—such men as Dr. T. P. Stafford, of the Kansas City Theological Seminary (see his "Origin of Christian Science"); Dr. Henry C. Sheldon, of Boston University ("Christian Science So-Called"); Mr. Frederick W. Peabody ("The Religio-Medical Masquerade"); Dr. James H. Snowden ("The Truth About Christian Science"); Dr. J. M. Haldeman ("Christian Science in the Light of Holy Scripture"). Many other authorities might be used to show that my interpretation is in harmony with the general understanding of those who have studied this system.

I will discuss four general points with reference to Mrs. Eddy's teachings: first, her main teachings; second, a comparison of her teachings with the teachings of Christianity; third, the inconsistencies of her teachings; fourth, the elements of her appeal to the minds of men.

I. Mrs. Eddy's Main Teachings

To get at Mrs. Eddy's main teachings it will be best to see first if we can find a fundamental and comprehensive principle that helps to understand the whole system. Fortunately there is such a principle; and when one gets that principle, he will have little difficulty in understanding Mrs. Eddy's whole system—not only her teachings, but also her inconsistencies, her weaknesses and the strength of her appeal. But unless we do get a grasp on this fundamental principle, it will be impossibe to make much of her system or (as it sometimes appears) her jumble of ideas.

1. *Her Fundamental Principle.*

What, then, is Mrs. Eddy's fundamental principle?

It can be stated in several different ways. Let Mrs. Eddy herself speak: "Mind is All and matter is naught as the leading factor in Mind-Science" (p. 109). "The only realities are the divine Mind and idea" (p. 109). "God is the Principle of divine metaphysics" (p. 112). Then she says (p. 113): "The fundamental

propositions of divine metaphysics are summarized in the four following, to me, *self-evident* propositions." Here then, are the four propositions, in her own words, that sum up the fundamental ideas of "divine metaphysics":

(1) "God is All-in-All.

(2) "God is good. Good is Mind.

(3) "God, Spirit, being All, nothing is matter.

(4) "Life, God, omnipotent good, deny death, evil, sin, disease. Disease, sin, evil, death, deny good, omnipotent God, Life" (p. 113).

She gives as synonyms for God, "Divine Principle, Life, Truth, Love, Soul, Spirit, Mind" (p. 115). "God is the divine Principle of all that represents him and all that really exists" (p. 272). "The starting point of divine Science is that God, Spirit, is All-in-All, and that there is no other might nor Mind—that God is Love, and therefore he is divine Principle" (p. 275).

Again, she says that "All is Mind, and that Mind is God, omnipotence, omnipresence,

omniscience—that is, all power, all presence, all Science" (p. 275).

Here, then, we have the fundamental idea of Eddyism, namely: The all-ness of God. Mrs. Eddy tells us that (p. 113) the propositions of "divine metaphysics" can be taken in inverse order and be true. This, she claims, is an evidence of their truth. So we can say, "God is All," or "All is God," "God is Mind," or "Mind is God." That is, she means that these terms for God can any one be substituted for any other and they will be true. So we can say, "All is God," "All is Mind," "All is Good," and so on.

The fundamental idea of Mrs. Eddy, then, is that God is the only reality; that he is Mind, that he is Good.

This principle, we see, is pantheistic; that is, it identifies all that exists with God.

2. *Inferences from This Fundamental Principle.*

There are certain immediate inferences from this fundamental principle—inferences that Mrs. Eddy herself draws and states in plain

language. These inferences give us the ideas by which Eddyism is best known.

(1) *The perfection of man.* This idea of the all-ness of God implies the perfection of man. Man, according to Mrs. Eddy, is an idea of God; and since God and his ideas are real and perfect, therefore man is real and perfect. The divine Mind and its idea are the only realities (p. 109). Here is her definition of man: "God's spiritual idea, individual, perfect, eternal" (p. 115). "The real man is spiritual and eternal." "Let us remember that harmonious and immortal man has existed forever, and is always beyond and above the mortal illusion of any life, substance, and intelligence as existent in matter . . . The Science of being reveals man as perfect, even as the Father is perfect, because the Soul, or Mind, of the spiritual man is God, the divine principle of all being, and because this real man is governed by Soul instead of sense, by the law of Spirit, not by the so-called laws of matter" (p. 302). "Spiritual man is the image or idea of God, an idea which cannot be lost nor separated from its divine Principle" (p. 303). "The perfect

man—governed by God, his perfect Principle —is sinless and eternal" (p. 304).

We will come back later to consider something of the significance of this idea of the perfection of man.

(2) *The denial of matter, sin, sickness, suffering and death.* The perfection of God means the perfection of man since man is an idea of God; but what does it mean as applied to other things around us?

As applied to matter, sin, sickness, suffering, death, etc., the all-ness of God means that these things are unreal, non-existent. That this statement is not a misinterpretation of Mrs. Eddy the following quotations will show. "God, Spirit, being All, nothing is matter." "Life, God, omnipotent good, deny death, evil, sin, disease.—Disease, sin, evil, death, deny good, omnipotent God, Life." These statements she makes on page 113 as "fundamental propositions of divine metaphysics."

She says that she combats either the theory that all is matter, or that matter originates in Mind (p. 269). She then goes on to say:

"One only of the following statements can be true: (1) that everything is matter; (2) that everything is Mind." She takes the latter as true. She will not allow that matter is all, nor that matter and mind co-exist. Therefore Mind (or God) is all. Mind exists; matter does not. "Matter and Mind are opposites. One is contrary to the other in its very nature and essence; hence both cannot be real. If one is real, the other must be unreal" (p. 270). Mrs. Eddy plainly teaches that matter is unreal, nonexistent. She holds that the existence of God as Mind excludes the existence of matter, because mind and matter (she says) are opposite and mutually exclusive. Endless quotations could be given to show that this is Mrs. Eddy's position.

By a similar process of reasoning Mrs. Eddy excludes sin, suffering, death, etc. As Mind excludes matter, so, she holds, God as Good excludes sin, suffering and death—evil of every kind or nature. She says: "Matter never produces mind. The immortal never produces the mortal. Good cannot result in evil. As God himself is good and is Spirit,

goodness and spirituality must be immortal. Their opposites, evil and matter, are mortal error, and error has no creator. If goodness and spirituality are real, evil and materiality are unreal and cannot be the outcome of an infinite God, good" (p. 277).

Mrs. Eddy, at one stroke then, has solved a problem that wise men and philosophers of all ages have stumbled over—the problem of evil. She has solved it by waving evil out of existence. The problem of suffering, which gave Job so much trouble, Mrs. Eddy settles by denying that there is any such thing as suffering. Poor old Job, if he had only had Mrs. Eddy to inform him that the problem over which he was worrying was no problem at all, because suffering was unreal! How much trouble and worry this little piece of information would have saved Job! Even Job's comforters were sadly deficient in wisdom as compared with this modern Job's comforter, Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy. Verily the world "do move."

(3) *Mrs. Eddy's explanation of matter and evil.* But we should not be in a hurry to decide

that Mrs. Eddy has finally disposed of matter and evil. In fact, she herself seems to be conscious of the fact that they are not finally disposed of when she waves them out of existence with the magic wand of her philosophy. She seems still to realize that they must be given some kind of explanation. They are here, even after she rules them out of court, and they clamor for recognition. And she cannot make herself intelligible to others without *talking as if they were real.* This she constantly does.

But what explanation of them does she give? She refers them to "mortal mind." As all that is real is referred to the infinite Mind, God, so all that is unreal—matter, sin, sickness, disease, death, etc.,—all this is referred to mortal mind. These unrealities are the ideas of mortal mind.

Hear Mrs. Eddy: "When what we erroneously term the five physical senses are misdirected, they are simply the manifested beliefs of mortal mind, which affirm that life, substance, and intelligence are material, instead of spiritual" (p. 274).

"All that we term sin, sickness and death is a mortal belief." "That matter is substantial or has life and sensation, is one of the false beliefs of mortals, and exists only in a supposititious consciousness" (p. 278). "Matter and its effects—sin, sickness, and death—are states of mortal mind which act, react, and then come to a stop. They are not facts of Mind. They are not ideas, but illusions" (p. 283). "Error is the so-called intelligence of mortal mind" (p. 282).

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Eddy seems to attribute matter to mortal mind or mortal mind to matter, and to refer sin and all sorts of evil either to mortal mind or to matter.

But the question arises: What about mortal mind? Where does it come from? What produced it? What are its qualities?

As just stated, she refers mortal mind to matter, or matter to mortal mind (or sometimes she puts the physical senses instead of mortal mind); and she reduces both, with all matter and evil, to illusion, or unreality. Mortal mind is just as illusory and unreal as its ideas.

She says: "The mind supposed to exist in matter or beneath a skull-bone is a myth, a misconceived sense and false conception as to man and Mind" (p. 281). "There are no material senses, for matter has no mind" (p. 278). Mortal mind, or the physical senses, explain matter, sin, sickness, disease, and death. These are the ideas of mortal mind. But we must remember that both mortal mind (and the physical senses) and its ideas—sin, evil, etc., —are only illusions. Neither mortal mind nor its ideas have any reality.

3. *The Nature of Mrs. Eddy's System of Thought.*

Let us stop now and look at the nature of Mrs. Eddy's system of thought. Her fundamental principle is pantheistic, because that principle is the all-ness of God. God is the only reality. Mrs. Eddy denies that her system is pantheistic, but it is, in spite of her denial. Any system of thought that identifies God with the sum-total of reality is pantheistic. Mrs. Eddy denies that her system is pantheistic on the ground that pantheism identifies God with the material world, while she denies

that God is to be so identified with matter or with the world of nature. But her refusal to identify God with nature does not save her system from pantheism; it only modifies her pantheism.

Let us look at this denial. She gives a sweeping denial of the reality of mortal mind, the physical senses, sin, sickness, death—everything of the nature of evil or imperfection. She does this on the ground that these things would be inconsistent with the perfection of God; they would contradict his omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. Some pantheists have perhaps not been quite so discerning as Mrs. Eddy on this point. They have affirmed the all-ness of God, and have therefore identified God with the natural order, with man and his sin. Mrs. Eddy saw that this would destroy the perfection of God; she therefore had to get rid of these imperfections. She simply forbade them to exist; she waved her magic wand over them and said: "Hocus pocus, be gone." Then she led herself and her followers to believe that all these common and unclean things did not exist.

We can therefore see that, while Mrs. Eddy's system is pantheistic in affirming the allness of God, still it is also dualistic in that it recognizes mortal mind and its ideas over against God and his ideas.

Mrs. Eddy speaks of two worlds or universes. One is God and his ideas; the other is mortal mind and its ideas. These two are directly and fundamentally opposed to each other. Whatever can be affirmed of one must be denied of the other. God is real; mortal mind (and its ideas) is unreal. God is true; mortal mind is illusory, false, erroneous.

A great gulf, therefore, is fixed between God and his ideas on the one hand, and mortal mind and its ideas on the other hand. Her system is pantheistic; she clings to her affirmation of the allness of God. But she can do this only at the cost of introducing a dualistic principle into her system. That is, she saves her pantheism by giving it up.

Mrs. Eddy tries very hard to avoid dualism. She recognizes in general only three systems of thought—materialism, or that matter is all; dualism, that matter and mind both are real;

and her own system, that God is All. She denies that matter is all, or even that matter exists along with mind. She affirms that God is All.

But in trying to stay out of the ditch of dualism she stumbles into it; because while she denies the reality of matter (and its related ideas), she is constantly talking about them *as if they were real.* On practically every page of her writings she recognizes the existence of matter by talking about it. She denies matter, protests against it, grows black in the face swearing there is no such thing. But the very fact that she makes so much fuss about it betrays to every onlooker that she practically recognizes matter as real. Moreover (a fact to be emphasized later), she constantly appeals to the senses to prove her system true. Besides, she talks about sickness *as if* it were real, and disease *as if* she had done a wonderful thing in healing.

Mrs. Eddy's system, therefore, we can describe as dualistic pantheism, or as pantheistic dualism.* It is pantheistic in affirming that

*This description is given by some one else; I do not now recall who it is.

God is All; it is dualistic in recognizing over against God and his ideas mortal mind and its ideas.

II. Is Eddyism Christian?

Mrs. Eddy calls her system "Christian Science." In this there is involved a double claim—a claim to be in harmony with Christ, his teachings and work, and a claim that her system of thought is scientific, is valid knowledge; as a matter of fact, if we accept Mrs. Eddy's statement of the matter, the only valid knowledge.

As to science, Mrs. Eddy denies the validity of physical science, all knowledge of the natural world. She does this because she reduces the physical world, our physical senses, and all our ideas of the natural world to illusion. Of course, then, there can be no physical science, no valid knowledge of the natural order. Such a thing, then, as science based on observation of the facts and laws of nature she will not recognize. The only science she recognizes is what she calls "divine Science," which is her system of pantheistic philosophy,

based altogether on dogmatic assumptions, and governed by the laws of deductive logic; and logic used in a very narrow and abstract way.

She says "there are no material senses" (p. 278). Then, of course, there can be no knowledge given through these senses. What Mrs. Eddy means by science, therefore, is altogether different from what people usually mean by it. They mean a knowledge of the world based on observation; she means a system of pantheistic philosophy.

Mrs. Eddy made two claims on the religious side, with reference to her system, neither of which is true. One was that she got her system by direct revelation from God. The other was that her teaching was the continuation of the work and teaching of Jesus. She says: "The Bible was my only text-book" (p. 110). Because her work was thus the development of Christ's, she claimed his name for her system, and called it "Christian Science." It is rather strange that the originator of every new vagary that starts wants the name and authority of Christ back of his movement. Perhaps this is due to the fact that he knows that if he

should tell the world in plain language that his vagary is opposed to Christ and his teaching, people would have little to do with it. But if he can pass off his false teaching in the name of Christ, it will be much easier to get people to listen to what he says. This desire to claim the name of Jesus for every new movement that starts is a compliment to Jesus.

But now let us face the question squarely. Has Mrs. Eddy a right to claim the name of Jesus Christ for her system of teaching? We claim she has not for the following reasons:

1. *Her Claim to Get Her Revelation from God is False.*

This can be proven in several ways.

(1) In the first place, it has been pretty conclusively shown that she took her material from a certain P. P. Quimby, a mental healer who died somewhere around 1865, or '66. She was under Dr. Quimby's treatment for sometime, and had access to some of his manuscripts. I will not undertake to go into the proof of this proposition. Those who wish to see into it further will find the evidence in such

books as "The Religio-Medical Masquerade," by F. W. Peabody; "Christian Science So-Called," by Henry C. Sheldon; "A History of the New Thought Movement," by H. W. Dresser; and "The Quimby Manuscripts," by H. W. Dresser. These writers show conclusively that she got the main elements of her system from Dr. Quimby. At first she acknowledged her obligation to him, but afterwards repudiated him and denied getting her ideas from him. Surely it must have been some other spirit than the Spirit of God that caused her to pass off Dr. Quimby's ideas on the world as her own, while denying that she was under any obligation to him, and also claiming that she got her ideas by revelation from God.

(2) Another way of testing her claim to give a revelation from God is to examine her teaching to see if there is anything new in it. A revelation from God will give us some truth the world has never had before; otherwise it is no revelation, because it reveals nothing.

Dr. T. P. Stafford, of Kansas City, has made such an examination of Mrs. Eddy's teaching

and has given his conclusions in his book "The Origin of Christian Science." In this book Dr. Stafford has shown that in practically every main feature of its teaching Eddyism is in agreement with Neo-Platonism and with the teaching of Spinoza, known as the father of modern pantheism. Neo-Platonism was a heathen philosophy developed in the early centuries of Christian history and fundamentally opposed to Christianity. Here, then, is Mrs. Eddy passing off, in a somewhat changed form, the teachings of an ancient heathen philosophy and claiming the name and authority of Jesus Christ to give it standing. There was one respect in which Mrs. Eddy was original: she applied this ancient heathen philosophy to the idea of healing, and thereby coined a fortune. We will have to give her credit for having a little financial shrewdness, even if she was not original in her philosophy, and was not a prophet of God.

(3) Another thing that shows she was not the recipient of a revelation from God is the fact that on every fundamental point her teaching is opposed to the teaching of Chris-

tianity. Those who hold to the Bible and Christianity will have to give up Mrs. Eddy. We may have Mrs. Eddy or Christianity; we cannot have both.

We will now proceed to show further that on all the cardinal points Mrs. Eddy contradicts Christianity.

2. *Her Doctrine of God Does Not Square with that of Jesus and the Bible.*

To discuss this subject adequately would require a volume; so I must summarize it.

It is true that Mrs. Eddy uses, at times, the language of Scripture and of orthodox theology in speaking of God; but she takes all the meaning out of such language. Christianity believes in a God who has revealed himself in the external world—the world of fact and of history—supremely in Jesus Christ as the incarnation of God. Mrs. Eddy, in a word, denies all this by reducing the world of external fact and of history to illusion. For Mrs. Eddy, God is a God who reveals himself only in the world of ideas. Her God is only a philosopher, not a doer. In fact, it is doubtful if Mrs. Eddy's God should be spoken of as personal.

It is true that she grudgingly uses the word personality as applied to God. She says: "If the term personality, as applied to God, means infinite personality, then God *is* infinite *Person*" (p. 116). But she robs the idea of personality of all its significance, because she disregards the element of will. She constantly speaks of God as divine "Principle" and "Thought." But principle without will or activity, is not personality. She denies to God the right to answer prayer, to forgive or pardon sin (see pp. 1-15, especially 5, 11, 12). She says: "God is not separate from the wisdom he bestows" (p. 6). "God is not influenced by man" (p. 7). "Prayer is not to be used as a confessional to cancel sin" (p. 5). Her God *does nothing*. And a God who does nothing is worth nothing to us. This remark will apply to much religious, pantheistic thought to-day, other than Eddyism. Moreover, Mrs. Eddy's God is cold, abstract Principle—a philosopher God—without feeling or sympathy for man in his sufferings and struggles, or mercy for his sin. How could a God who knows nothing about matter, sin, suffering or death have any

sympathy or mercy for man? According to Mrs. Eddy all these things lie outside the circle of God's ideas and he knows nothing of them; so, of course, he can do nothing about them.

Contrast with this the teaching of Jesus about God as the heavenly Father who knows all our needs, who knows every sparrow that falls to the ground, who numbers the hairs of our heads, to whom we are to pray for daily bread and the forgiveness of sins. The God of Mrs. Eddy is not the God of Jesus Christ.

3. *Mrs. Eddy Denies the Christian View with Reference to Matter, the Natural World, Sin and Evil.*

All these things Mrs. Eddy denies, reducing them to an illusion of mortal mind. According to her, for God they are non-existent; they lie outside the range of his thought and knowledge.

Over against this, Christianity and the Bible teach that the world, even the physical world, is real, is God's creation. Sin and suffering are real. Sin is man's opposition to the will

of God. God uses suffering to punish sin and also as a means of discipline and spiritual development for man. The God of Christianity is no blind, impersonal principle who can not see nor realize the awful sin and suffering of the world.

4. *Mrs. Eddy Denies the Christian View of Christ.*

According to Mrs. Eddy there was a difference between Jesus and the Christ. Christ was the divine idea—eternal and perfect—which was united with the mortal man Jesus (pp. 332-334). As we have seen, the reality of every man is eternal and perfect, an idea and image of God. So Christ seems in the same sense to be eternal, perfect and inseparable from God. It is doubtful if Mrs. Eddy thought of this idea of God as personal. This Christ of God that was united with the man Jesus came also upon all prepared to receive Christ, or Truth, such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, etc. (p. 333). The human or mortal man Jesus was separated from the Christ at the time of his ascension; "the human, ma-

terial concept, or Jesus, disappeared while the spiritual self, or Christ, continues to exist in the eternal order of divine Science" (p. 334).

This sounds very much like the gnosticism that John the Apostle was combatting in his First Epistle (and perhaps in his Gospel). These gnostics made Christ a spirit being that came upon the man Jesus at his baptism and left him before his death. They also denied the reality of his body, his human nature, just as Mrs. Eddy did. Over against this, John affirms the reality of Jesus' human life. "The Word became flesh" (John 1: 14). The apostles saw, heard, handled him (1 John 1: 1-3). He was no phantom, but a tangible reality. Whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar (1 John 2: 22). That gets Mrs. Eddy as well as those early gnostics. She made Jesus a mortal man, with an illusory body that disappeared at his ascension, leaving us a spiritual idea, instead of a divine-human person.

Mrs. Eddy thus denies the fundamental principle of Christianity; namely, the incarnation of God in a human life. It is doubtful whether she believed in the true deity of Christ, and it

is certain that she did not believe in his genuine humanity. Christianity believes in a permanent union of deity and humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. He is just as much human now as he was when on earth in a visible body. In the place of this permanent incarnation of God in a human person, Jesus Christ, Mrs. Eddy gives us the temporary appearance, in the guise and form of a human person, of a divine idea. There was, then, according to Mrs. Eddy, no real and permanent union of God and man; there was only an apparent one, and that was temporary.

5. *Mrs. Eddy Denies the Christian Doctrine of the Atonement and of the Resurrection of Jesus.*

The death and resurrection of Jesus are the foundation facts of Christianity. They constitute the saving work of Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament.

Mrs. Eddy denies both the death and resurrection of Jesus. Her sweeping denials of the reality of matter, suffering and death make this necessary. She says that he "had power to

lay down the human sense of life," and that "he allowed men to attempt the destruction of the mortal body in order that he might furnish the proof of immortal life" (p. 51). She speaks of "Jesus' unchanged physical condition after what seemed to be death" and says that when the disciples saw him after his crucifixion, they "learned that he had not died" (p. 46). She says again: "His three days' work in the sepulchre set the seal of eternity on time"; and "His disciples believed Jesus to be dead while he was hidden in the sepulchre, whereas he was alive, demonstrating within the narrow tomb the power of Spirit to overrule mortal, material sense" (p. 44).

The resurrection, then, for Mrs. Eddy meant that Jesus was demonstrating the supremacy of Mind over matter. But one wonders if this be true why the disciples of Jesus continued to speak of him as having suffered and died and risen from the dead. They did not seem to get the point of Jesus' demonstration. (One is tempted to think that it is Mrs. Eddy's demonstration they failed to see). Mrs. Eddy now says: "At the time when Jesus felt our

infirmities, he had not conquered all the beliefs of the flesh or his sense of material belief" (p. 53). This seems to indicate that Jesus was trying, not only to overcome the errors of his disciples, but also to correct his own "sense of material life" (p. 53).

She takes a number of thrusts at the idea of vicarious atonement and shows that she does not accept it. Why should she, since sin is only an illusion? For her the suffering of Jesus is only an example to be followed: "His consummate example was for the salvation of us all, but only through doing the works which he did and taught others to do" (p. 51).

6. *Mrs. Eddy Denies the Christian View of Salvation.*

This necessarily follows from the fact that she denies every presupposition of that doctrine. With a totally different view of God, man, Christ, sin, and the world, it is inevitable that she should have a different view of salvation.

We have seen that Mrs. Eddy regards man, the real man, as an idea of God, eternal and

perfect. On the other hand, his body, his physical senses, are illusion. Sin, suffering, and death are unreal. So the only salvation possible would be for man to find that there was nothing to be saved from. And man as an idea of God is already perfect and needs no saving.

To be saved, then, for Mrs. Eddy means to come to an understanding of the unreality of sin, sickness, death, etc. She says that Christian Science "heals the sick and sinning as no other system does. Christian Science, rightly understood, leads to eternal harmony" (pp. 337, 338). She says that Adam means *a dam*, an "obstruction, error, even the supposed separation of man from God" (p. 338). To be saved means that you find out that sin is only a supposed separation from God, not a real one. (It must have required a wonderful knowledge of the original Hebrew for her to get such a profound meaning out of the word Adam). "To get rid of sin through Science, is to divest sin of any supposed mind or reality, and never to admit that sin can have intelligence or power, pain or pleasure. You

conquer error by denying its verity" (p 339). This, she says, is the only kind of forgiveness needed. You destroy sin by understanding that there is no sin to be destroyed.

Fortunately, Mrs. Eddy gives us a fine illustration, one that makes clear what she means by salvation. She compares our belief in sin, sickness, etc., to the belief of a child in ghosts. The thing to do with a child that is afraid of ghosts, she indicates, is not to encourage its belief in ghosts and thus increase its fear, but to teach it that ghosts are unreal, and thus deliver the child from its unreasonable fear of same. So, she would have us believe, our belief in sin and sickness is just superstitious belief in ghosts that do not exist. What we need is not deliverance from sin and sickness but deliverance from our beliefs in sin and sickness. Hear her words of wisdom: "The age has not wholly outlived the sense of ghostly beliefs. . . . We must lay aside the spectral at all points. We must not continue to admit the somethingness of superstition, but we must yield up all belief in it and be wise. . . . The true idea of being is spiritual and

immortal, and from this it follows that whatever is laid off is the ghost, some unreal belief" (see pp. 352, 353). Therefore, O ye mortals, what you need is to get rid of your superstitious belief in the ghosts of sin and sickness. Then will you be wise, well and sound. And to think that that kind of stuff is passed off in the name of Jesus Christ!*

Christianity teaches that, upon condition of repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ as a crucified and risen Redeemer, God forgives the sinner's sins and renews his moral nature, and that, by the grace of God, the sinner will be finally delivered completely from the presence and power of sin. All of this is utterly foreign to Mrs. Eddy and her system of ideas. There is really very little moral earnestness in what Mrs. Eddy has to say about sin and salvation. She repeats a few hackneyed objections to the idea of salvation by grace, such as that it will encourage to sin; and occasionally she so far forgets her own denial of the reality of sin as to make a few feeble suggestions about the sinner's reforma-

*Those acquainted with current thought will note a decided similarity here to much of our liberal theology of to-day.

tion and indicates that God uses penalty as a means of bringing about this improvement, but indicates that it may not be completed until the next life (see pp. 36, 39, 40).

So Mrs. Eddy and the New Testament are diametrically opposed on the question of salvation.

7. *Mrs. Eddy Denies the Christian Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.*

Christians regard the Holy Spirit as the third person in the Trinity, our Regenerator, Sanctifier and abiding Companion. Mrs. Eddy blasphemously identifies the Holy Spirit with her nonsensical system of thought, falsely called Christian Science (p. 331).

I challenge anybody to find a system of thought that is more completely opposed to Christianity on every fundamental idea or principle for which Christianity stands than is Eddyism. In view of the fact that it is so opposed, I wish it might be called by the name of its founder rather than by the name of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ. Let it be called *Eddyism.*

And since Eddyism is not only different from Christianity, but is even opposed to it, let those who oppose Jesus Christ and his religion take up with Eddyism if they will; but as for those who love him and believe that he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, let them have none of it; and furthermore, let them understand the false teachings of this insidious system and speak a clear word in exposing its claim to have a right to wear the name of Jesus Christ.

III. The Contradictions and Inconsistencies of Mrs. Eddy

1. *Her Moral Inconsistencies.*

One might dwell on the moral inconsistencies and contradictions of the life and character of Mrs. Eddy. There seems to have been very little in the life and character of the founder to commend her teaching. It is true that her followers have cast a halo of glory around her head; but in order to do so they have disregarded apparently well established facts—a thing that does not seem

to be difficult for Mrs. Eddy's followers to do, perhaps due to the fact that one in order to become her disciple has to shut his eyes to the palpable facts of life all around him. It seems that Mrs. Eddy, in spite of her teaching that God is Love, yet herself lived a very loveless life as evidenced by her dealings with the members of her family. Not only was hers a loveless life, but it was a life of fear. She seems to have been possessed with the fear that some of her enemies would make her the object of mental malpractice, and she would call her household up at night to have them ward off (mentally) the enemy. This sounds almost as if she believed in witchcraft. Believing, as she said she did, that sickness and evil are the results of evil thoughts, she was afraid that someone would direct the shafts of his evil thoughts at her. Yet how inconsistent was this with her doctrine that mortal mind and its ideas were only illusions and not realities. She was afraid of these illusions just the same. What a pity that this poor old soul who taught us that our sin and sickness are only the ghosts of our superstitious fears could not get rid of

the goblins of her own fears, but lived in constant dread of them!

One of the plainest contradictions lies in the fact, already mentioned, that she claimed to get her system by direct revelation from God. The disproof of this has been given; so there is no use to do more than call attention here to the inconsistency.

There is one respect, however, in which Mrs. Eddy's claim to originality must be granted; that is, in her ability to take an ancient system of heathen philosophy and make an application of it to the fact of sickness and sorrow, collect money for it, and thus coin a fortune. It is true that Mrs. Eddy, at least in her latter days, declined to take patients or to grant consultation to sufferers. This was announced at the close of the preface of her book, "Science and Health."

Here, then, is what we have. A woman claims to have the one and only system of divine healing the world has ever seen. Jesus, she says, practiced it; but God called her in these latter days to renew the teaching of this

system. She was thus to complete, under the call of God, the work of Jesus.

But there were two noticeable things about Jesus and his work. One was that he healed the sick in his own personal ministry. The other was that he never charged anybody one penny for either his teaching or his healing. He healed by the power of God, and the power of God flowed freely through him to a suffering world. Now, in Mrs. Eddy's case, these two things were reversed. She declined to give herself in personal healing contact with the world. No sufferer from disease could consult her, the one through whom this system of divine healing was to be given to the world by direct revelation. It was not that she healed people until she was exhausted and then sought temporary rest. No, she declined altogether to practice the healing power that God had so wonderfully revealed to her. Perhaps it was the part of discretion to decline to heal personally or to give medical consultation! Of course, such a thought is wicked, about one whom God so wonderfully anointed with wisdom and healing; but some of us Gentiles can't

well help having some wicked thoughts about the matter! Then we have the consolation of knowing that our wicked thoughts are only illusions anyway!

Then she was unlike Jesus in charging for her teaching. Both her writings and her personal instruction came high. The suffering world might perish so far as her efforts were concerned; but she saw to it that she got the cold cash for the heavenly wisdom that she gave out. Nor can this be claimed as an application of the principle that those who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are not necesary to support one lonely old woman after all the members of her family have been cast off and disinherited! (For further information on this point see "Christian Science So-Called," by Henry C. Sheldon, and "The Religio-Medical Masquerade," by F. W. Peabody).

2. *The Philosophical Contradiction.*

There lies in Eddyism, as in every system of thought that tries to interpret all life and reality in terms of some one thing, a difficulty,

if not an inherent impossibility. Materialism, for instance, tries to interpret everything in terms of matter; but it fails because life, thought, will, personality, refuse to be reduced to matter. Idealism tries to interpret everything in terms of thought or ideas; but it is a difficult, if not an impossible, task to reduce everything to thought or ideas. Pantheism tries to interpret everything in terms of God; but the pantheist soon runs across the difficulty that there are many things, such as matter, sin, sickness, suffering and death, that do not seem to be factors or elements in the life of a holy and spiritual God.

Mrs. Eddy saw this difficulty, and tried to solve it by refusing existence to all those factors in life that cannot be reduced to factors in the life of God. No doubt there are difficulties here for any view, even for Christian theism. Perhaps no theory of life can wholly satisfy the reason with regard to these difficulties. But with that point we are not now concerned. We are rather concerned with the point that Mrs. Eddy's proposed solution is an

impossible one, because it involves a fundamental contradiction.

As to thought, it tries to solve the problem of matter, sin, sickness, etc., in their relation to God and to reality, by denying their existence. But that is the very thing that we cannot allow. We cannot allow any so-called system of thought to solve the problem of life and reality by denying one whole class of facts—one that is prominent and persistent in its claims on our thought. The class of facts that Mrs. Eddy denies is just the class (especially sin and suffering; the problem of matter is not so pressing) that raises the most serious problems of life, both theoretical and practical. And it is sheer folly to try to solve the problem by denying the reality of the facts that create the problem. You do not solve a problem by denying its existence. Shut your eyes to the fact of sin and suffering, deny their existence as long as you will; but when you open your eyes, there they are—the same ghastly, awful realities that they have always been. The type of optimism that solves the problem of sin and suffering by denying their existence is the

optimism of a fool's philosophy. It is like the economic philosophy of the fool who proposes to support his family on the interest of the debts he owes.

This rift in Mrs. Eddy's system appears in what has already been pointed out as the dualistic phase of her system. She had to recognize mortal mind and its ideas over against God and his ideas. While contantly denying the reality of mortal mind and its ideas, at the same time she constantly spoke of these as if they were real. She could not think, nor make herself intelligible to others without doing this. This shows that her system had a fundamental contradiction in it. The whole structure of human thought and language is against her. Human thought, and therefore language, is built on the assumption of the reality of the external world—the world of matter, of time and space, as known through our senses and in daily experience. Successfully to deny the reality of this world of experience one would have to reconstruct the whole of our human life. Knowledge of this world is given in experience. No one has a right arbitrarily to set

aside our experience and the knowledge that comes from experience. One might have the right to imagine a different kind of a world and tell us what his imaginary world was like. But he would have no right to try to substitute his imaginary world for the real one, and ther grow impatient with the rest of us because we were not willing to allow that his imaginary world was the real one. That is exactly what Mrs. Eddy has tried to do. To make a world according to one's own plan is a good big undertaking. Nobody has ever succeeded in doing that except God, and some people doubt that even he has, so great is the problem of sin and suffering.

The absurdity of Mrs. Eddy's system showed itself in its contradiction of the facts of life; but it also shows itself in the fact that Mrs. Eddy, as well as some of her followers, has never lived according to her own teaching; nor can they do so. Mrs. Eddy denied the reality of matter and of the physical senses. She said that the pleasures and pains of matter were a myth (p. 294). According to her, then, life, real life, is independent of physical

conditions. Why, then, do the disciples of Mrs. Eddy not live according to their own doctrine? Sometimes they do try to put their doctrine into practice as related to sickness and disease. They have thus inflicted unnecessary and cruel suffering on little children and others by their senseless philosophy.

But why do they not undertake to practice their absurd philosophy in other respects? If life is independent of physical conditions; if matter is unreal and illusory; then pray why do the advocates of this philosophy insist on eating three times a day? If the real man is spiritual, eternal and perfect, why should an illusory body be fed with illusory food? These illusory bodies of Mrs. Eddy's followers seem to require food and clothing and constant care just as much as the bodies of the rest of us common mortals. Now and then one of them so far forgets his fool's philosophy as to go to see the doctor, or consult a dentist. Now, when is he really sane, when he throws his philosophy to the winds and consults the doctor, or when he inwardly groans, outwardly smiles and swears by all that is good and bad that

sickness and suffering are unreal? When is the Eddyite telling the truth, when he says that physical pleasures are a myth, or when he eats like an animal? I confess that I have an animal appetite. I like to eat. To me the pleasure of eating strawberries and ice cream is no myth. I do not claim that such is the highest pleasure in life; but nevertheless, it is real. And I do not see how I could get along in this mundane sphere without seeing after some of my elemental animal necessities. But my Eddyite brother says he does not need these things, to him they are only a myth; yet he eats just like I do. If he believes his own philosophy, why does he not practice it? There is something wrong with a philosophy that runs directly contrary to what the man holding the philosophy and everybody else practice.

Mrs. Eddy denied the reality of matter; but she spent much time and energy grasping after a little of this non-reality in the form of the almighty dollar. She said that the senses were illusory and could not be depended on; yet she constantly appealed to the testimony of the

senses to prove that she healed the sick and taught the truth. If matter is unreal, and the senses illusory, what right did she have to publish books and ask people to read them in order to find out the truth? As a matter of fact, the real man, which is already perfect and eternal, certainly does not need to learn the truth; and mortal mind is unreal and illusory and could not learn it. Consequently, all Mrs. Eddy's efforts to set us right were useless and wasted. When any Eddyite makes an honest effort for one month to live according to his own philosophy, then, and not before, will he have a right to ask the rest of us to consider the claims of his system. When Mrs. Eddy's disciples quit dying, then we may consider her doctrine that death is unreal.

Mr. Peabody seems to think that the followers of Mrs. Eddy do not take any too seriously the responsibility to tell the truth. (See his "Religio-Medical Masquerade"). Is there not a reason for this to be found in the fact that in order to become a disciple of Mrs. Eddy one has to deny what his own senses, his mental constitution, and his whole life's experience

tell him is true? He has to begin by affirming as false what he cannot help but know as the truth and affirming as true what he knows to be false.

This is enough to show that Mrs. Eddy's system is shot through and through with contradictions and inconsistencies, both theoretical and practical.

IV. The Appeal of Mrs. Eddy's Teaching

But the question arises: If Mrs. Eddy's teaching is false, unchristian and contradictory, why does it make such an appeal? Why does it win so many adherents? It has had, and has yet, considerable popularity.

I do not agree with those who say that its popularity is due to the tendency of the human mind to want to be "humbugged"—to what Mark Twain (I believe it was he) called the "infinite gullibility" of the human race. No doubt the mind of man is often very superficial in its workings and is easily duped. This seems to be especially true in the realm of religion. The success of such movements as

Russellism, Mormonism, Eddyism, and Spiritism shows this to be true.

But I believe that the success of such movements is also a testimony to the fact that there are certain fundamental needs of the human mind and heart that should be met, and that it is better for us to study these needs and see if we do not have something in Christianity that will meet these needs much more truly than does Eddyism.

What are some of the needs of man's mind and heart to which Eddyism makes its appeal? What gives it its success?

1. *It Recognizes the Power of Thought Over Matter, of Mind Over Body.*

Mrs. Eddy says: "Mortals must change their ideals in order to improve their models. A sick body is evolved from sick thoughts. Sickness, disease and death proceed from fear" (p. 260). Again she says: "Hold thought steadfastly to the enduring, the good and the true, and you will bring these into your experience proportionately to their occupancy of your thoughts" (p. 261). There is no doubt that thought large-

ly influences our bodies. Fear and foreboding help to produce a morbid condition of the physical organism. Many people to-day recognize this relative power of the mind over the body. We have as a result all sorts of exhortations to be cheerful, to smile, to forget our troubles, etc. Much of this is good, and much of it is also superficial. But in regard to this we need to keep in mind two things. One is that there is a limit to the power of the mind over the body. Morbid thinking will no doubt help to produce a morbid condition of body, and pure thoughts and a cheerful attitude of mind will work in the opposite direction. But it is also true that there are some cases of sickness and disease that are not due to our thoughts. A child does not take the measles because it or anybody else thinks measley thoughts. There is not a disciple of Mrs. Eddy in the land who will knowingly expose himself to small-pox or yellow fever unless he has been immunized. The other thing to keep in mind is that a recognition of this relative power of mind over matter is quite a different thing from Mrs. Eddy's more radical doctrine that mortal mind and

its thoughts are unreal and illusory. Mrs. Eddy does make statements like those given above in which she seems to recognize the real existence of our mortal minds and of our bodies. But this is a slip from her real position. Her more characteristic and radical doctrine is that our bodies are unreal and that all our thoughts of sickness are an illusion.

Doubtless many people have been attracted to Mrs. Eddy's teaching under the impression that she stood for the milder doctrine of the mastery of mind over the body and bodily states. This is a wrong impression. If this were all that Eddyism stood for Mrs. Eddy could have claimed nothing unusual for herself in propagating a doctrine of that kind; and a reading of most any page of "Science and Health" will show that she taught more than that. What she did do was to take this commonly recognized principle of the superiority of mind to matter as a starting point to set forth her more radical doctrine of the nothingness of matter and disease.

We are living in an age when there seems to be setting in a reaction against "scientific

naturalism," or materialism. Science has accomplished wonders. It has accomplished such wonders that some of its advocates have become somewhat arrogant and have made extravagant claims for it. They have even passed off in the name of science a materialistic metaphysics that amounts to materialism. Now there is a pretty strong reaction against this materialistic naturalism that allows no room for freedom and religion. Man's higher nature will not permanently be denied its rights, even in the name of science. But we need to remember that a pantheism that practically denies the personality of God, the reality of the world-order in which we live, the moral life of man by destroying the concepts of right and wrong, is worth no more to man than is a "scientific" naturalism that makes matter and its laws the supreme or only reality. In the case of naturalism, man is only a link in the chain of mechanical causation; in the case of Mrs. Eddy's pantheism, he is an abstract idea of an abstract God. There is no use to jump out of the frying-pan of materialism into the fire of pantheism.

2. *It Offers a Solution for the Problem of Sin and Suffering.*

This problem has pressed tremendously on the minds, hearts and consciences of men as far back as we have a record of the thoughts of men. Men were therefore always ready to listen to anything that seems to be a solution of this awful problem. Mrs. Eddy not only offered a solution; she offered a solution that cost nothing. All you have to do is to recognize the fact that sin and suffering are unreal, that they are the illusory ideas of mortal mind, and the problem is solved. No doubt this easy solution for man's most pressing problem has appealed to many minds. It offered relief to the mind, gave ease to the conscience, and allowed men to take a "moral holiday" for the rest of their lives. It brought one to the place where he could "take out" and enjoy a good long rest.

It gives us rest, not only because it relieves us from the pressure of our own sins and sufferings, but also because at one swoop it does away with the whole problem of moral and social reform and advancement. There is no

use to bother about hospitals, institutions to care for the deformed and deficient, mentally, morally or spiritually. At one stroke we are relieved of all that responsibility.

But we should remember that we do not solve a problem simply by denying its existence. Mrs. Eddy solves the problem of sin by saying that it does not exist. We should remember that *cheap and easy solutions for great problems are always false.*

On the practical side, Mrs. Eddy, forgetting her denial of the reality of disease, claimed to be a great benefactor in healing disease. As a matter of fact, has Eddyism ever cured disease? If we could be shown that it had, one would be tempted to ask: "What then has Mrs. Eddy to boast of?" Since disease is nothing, to cure it would be to do nothing. So what has an Eddyite to claim credit for if he should ever cure the sick?

But those, like Mr. Peabody, who claim to know the system, challenge the claim that Eddyism has ever cured organic disease. Perhaps, since the mind has large power over the body and bodily functions, functional disorders

have often been corrected by the power of thought and mental attitudes. But this is a thousand miles from the claims of Eddyism.

No doubt, too, by the sheer force of will men have often overcome their physical weaknesses. Men often live because they will to live,, or die because they cease to fight for life. But this is contrary to Eddyism. Mrs. Eddy denied the will of man. She defines it as "The motive-power of error; mortal belief; animal power" (p. 597). In other words, will power belongs to that sphere of things that is taboo with Mrs. Eddy. So she talks it down and does not allow it to exist. She did not encourage men to overcome disease by fighting it. She said rather: "Cease fighting and learn what a fool you were for thinking you were sick."

3. *Another Appeal of Eddyism is that it Magnifies the Idea of God and Proposes to Bring Him Near.*

Mrs. Eddy tells us over and over again that God is All and in all. That seems at first sight to be very religious, and to

magnify God in our thoughts and lives. Since God is omnipresent and is in all things, it apparently brings him near to us.

Doubtless this has appealed to many people. The human heart is hungry for God. God alone can meet the need of man. Man's first need is not bread, nor health, nor wealth, but God. And here comes a system that offers us God before and above all things else. Why then should we not accept it?

That men are interested in this question of the nearness of God is shown by the revival in recent times of mysticism—the idea that God can be immediately apprehended in experience. Eddyism is one form of mysticism. As such it claims great credit for giving us a God near at hand.

But while claiming to bring God near let us see what it really does. Set it over against Christianity again.

In the first place, it denies the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. It thus removes at one stroke the whole revelation of God in Jesus Christ. It takes God, therefore, out of human history. It denies the reality of

the whole of human history; the whole historical order, the order of time and space, is reduced to illusion.

Not only so; it takes away the knowledge of God that comes through Christian experience. Christian experience is a realization of the presence of God in saving from sin. But Mrs. Eddy not only takes away the historical order; she also removes the foundations of the moral order. Sin, conscience, the moral will are all gone when Mrs. Eddy gets through explaining things.

More than that; Mrs. Eddy, by denying the validity of our everyday experience has removed the foundations of all knowledge, and we have not only lost our assurance with reference to God as given in the historical revelation in Jesus Christ and known in Christian experience, but we are not sure that we have any grounds left for believing in God at all. The only thing that Mrs. Eddy leaves us is a bare idea of God, the validity of which we must accept on her unsupported authority. That is a good big price to pay for what we get.

4. *Another Appeal of Eddyism Lies in the Fact that it Claims to Reduce the Facts of Life to a System.*

It gives us a comprehensive principle under which we can gather up all the experiences of life, however contradictory they may be.

There is no doubt that this demand for system is one of the most urgent demands of the human mind. The history of philosophy is largely a record of the search for a unifying principle that will reduce the chaotic facts of life to order

It is not our purpose here to try to solve this problem. One thing is certain: Mrs. Eddy has not solved it. She has not even made a contribution to the discussion of it. She has given us a dogmatic assertion of certain principles found in older forms of pantheism. We cannot get rid of the dualism of mind and matter, nor do away with sin and suffering, by asserting that God is All, and thereby deny the existence of matter, sin and all forms of evil. The problem is not that easy of solution.

The success of Eddyism, however, bears witness to the fact that they are wrong who

assert that our age is not interested in the ultimate questions of life and destiny—the questions with which theology and philosophy deal. Ours is a practical age, they tell us. Do not try to inflict on this practical age a lot of metaphysical questions that nobody can settle. That would be fine advice, on one condition; that is, that you could get men to quit thinking. But that they will not do. These questions we cannot avoid. Is there any solution for them?

In bringing this discussion to a close, I would like to affirm that the only answer that has been found for these questions of life and destiny is found in Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. He has solved the problem of sin and suffering, not theoretically first of all, but practically, by redeeming us from sin and turning all our sufferings into means of spiritual development. Our first need in relation to sin and suffering is not a theoretical solution of the problem, but a practical one; not to have our intellects enlightened, but our lives regenerated and redeemed. On the basis of the facts of redemption—a real salvation from real and

awful sin—we may work out a theoretical solution so far as we can. Beyond that we can wait.

In redeeming us Christ brought God near. He came near to save. We can know him. We can have daily fellowship with him.

My fellow Christians, preach Jesus Christ—the Christ whom God has made to be unto us wisdom, righteousness, santification and power—preach him with greater earnestness, persistence and courage. He alone, through a vital experience of the redeeming grace of God, can save the world from such sham philosophies and religions as Eddyism.

BOOK TO BE RETURNED

MAR 3- '67
APR 11 '68
JUL 17 1975
FEB 21 1978
MAR 3 1983*
MR 14 '97
MR 23 '99

CENTRAL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
0 0021 0005228 7

289.5
C752
Conner, Walter Thomas
AUTHOR
The teachings of Mrs. Eddy.
TITLE
28641
Date Due | Borrower's Name

289.5
C752 Conner, Walter Thomas
The teachings of Mrs. Eddy.
28641